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ABSTRACT

New data compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation make it clear that the peak hours for violent juvenile crime are 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Nearly half of all juvenile crime takes place between 2:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and nearly two-thirds of all violent juvenile crime takes place between 2:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. In addition, in 57% of families with children under 18, juveniles lack full-time parental supervision. This report focuses on days when school is in session, the days when after-school programs could have a major impact on youth activity during the prime time juvenile crime hours. If there were quality after-school programs available, crime could be reduced dramatically while students could develop values and skills they need to become good neighbors and responsible adults. After-school programs provide responsible adult supervision, constructive activities, and insulation from harmful peer pressures during high-risk hours. Research has demonstrated the value of after-school programs. Their "safe haven" and control features could have a large crime reduction impact. An appendix summarizes the data on crime occurrence. (Contains four graphs.) (SLD)

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ED 412 319

FIGHT CRIME INVEST IN KIDS

After-School Crime or After-School Programs:

Tuning In to the Prime Time for Violent Juvenile Crime and Implications for National Policy

A Report to the United States Attorney General

from

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS

by
James Alan Fox, Ph.D., Dean, College of Criminal Justice, Northeastern University
Sanford A. Newman, J.D., President, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

This report is based on the newly released data on the prevalence of violent juvenile crime by time of day. These data were compiled from the F.B.I.'s National Incident-Based Reporting System by Melissa Sickmund, Howard N. Snyder, and Eileen Poe-Yamagata for their forthcoming "Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1997 Update on Violence," National Center for Juvenile Justice (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention).

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After-School Crime *or* After-School Programs:

Tuning In to the Prime Time for Violent Juvenile Crime and Implications for National Policy

A Report to the United States Attorney General
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Executive Summary

Prime Time for Juvenile Crime

Until recently, the only solid data available to tell us at what time of day most juvenile crime occurs have been data from South Carolina. These data have been criticized because they came from only one state, and because that state had a more modest juvenile gang problem than many others.

New data have been compiled from FBI reports by the National Center on Juvenile Justice and the Office for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. These data which have recently become available are based on eight states: Alabama, Colorado, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, North Dakota, South Carolina, and Utah.[1]

These new data make clear that the peak hours for violent juvenile crime are 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM. They tell us that when the school bell rings, leaving millions of young people without responsible adult supervision or constructive activities, juvenile crime suddenly triples and prime time for juvenile crime begins.

Nearly half of all violent juvenile crime takes place during the six-hour period between 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM, and nearly **two thirds of all violent juvenile crime takes place during the nine hours between 2:00 PM and 11:00 PM . In contrast, just one seventh occurs during the eight hours from 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM, the period for which curfew laws are often suggested.**

This report focuses on days when school is in session -- the days when after-school programs could conceivably have a major impact on youth activity during the prime time juvenile crime hours. About half of the days of the year are school days, but 57% of violent crime committed by juveniles occur on these days.[2]

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1 Melissa Sickmund, Howard N. Snyder, and Eileen Poe-Yamagata "Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1997 Update on Violence," National Center for Juvenile Justice (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention).

2 Ibid.

Foolish Policy Choices

These data are a wake-up call telling us that we as a nation are making a foolish choice—and paying a tragic price. When we send millions of young people out on the streets after school with no responsible supervision or constructive activities, we reap a massive dose of juvenile crime. If, instead, we were to provide students with quality after-school programs, safe havens from negative influences, and constructive recreational, academic enrichment and community service activities, we would dramatically reduce crime while helping students develop the values and skills they need to become good neighbors and responsible adults.

Decisions Ahead

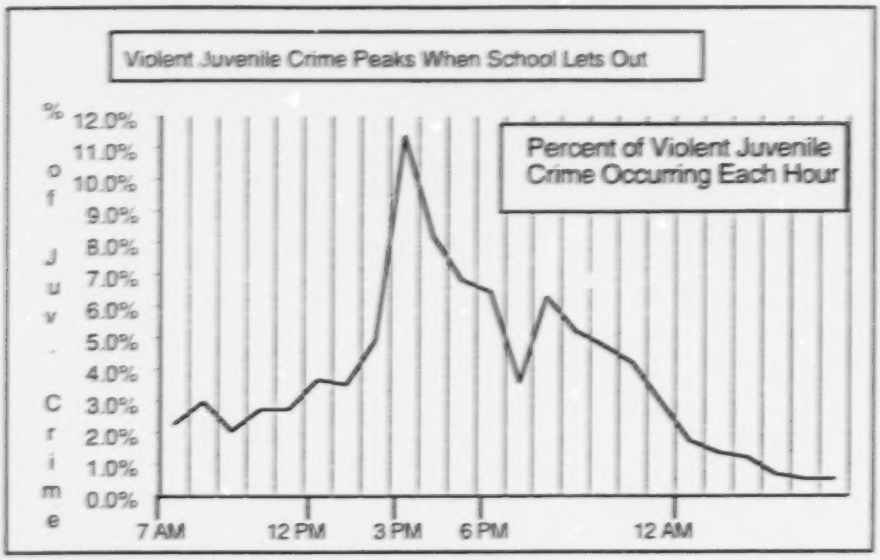
America's leaders must decide whether they are ready to invest in the after-school programs which can ensure that the school dismissal bell signals the start of a rich afternoon of constructive child and youth development and of community service rather than the start of a daily surge in juvenile crime.

Acknowledgement

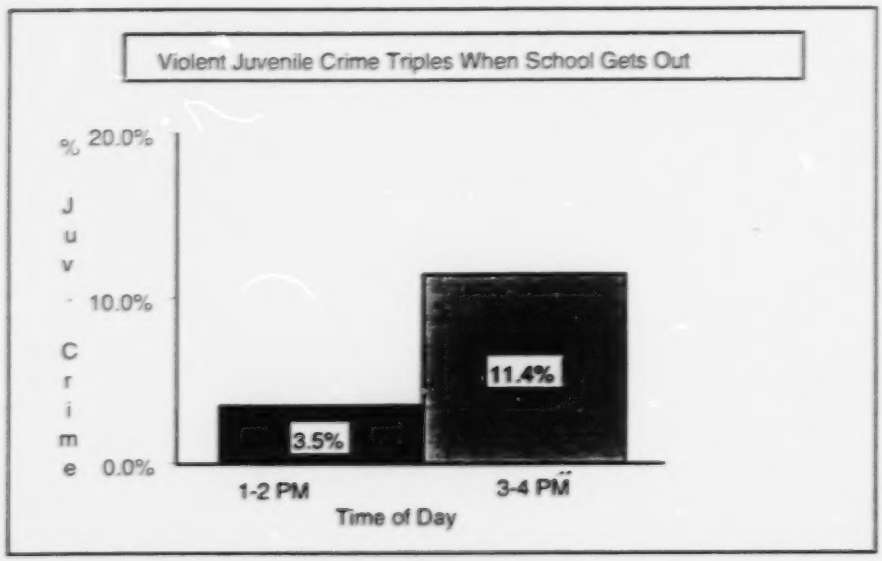
The authors gratefully acknowledge: FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS Associate Director Brendan Fitzsimons, who provided principal analytic support for this analysis; FIGHT CRIME Associate Director Amy Dawson; Communications Director John Bartlett; Research Director Bernard Reese; Office Manager Wendy Tuck; and interns Karen Breslin and Adam Lewin.

I. Critical New Information for Crime Prevention Policy: Peak Juvenile Crime Hours are 3:00 PM-8:00 PM

The evidence is indisputable. After spiking between 3:00 PM and 4:00 PM, violent juvenile crime begins a steady drop until 7:00 AM the next morning, and remains low until school is dismissed the next day. This pattern is illustrated below.



The hour immediately following school dismissal (3:00 PM-4:00 PM) yields three times as much juvenile crime as the hour from 1:00 PM-2:00 PM.



Almost half (45.4%) of all violent juvenile crime on school days takes place between 2:00 in the afternoon, when youngsters begin to be let out of school, and 8:00 in the evening. An additional 17.9% takes place between 8:00 PM and 11:00 PM., for a total of almost two thirds

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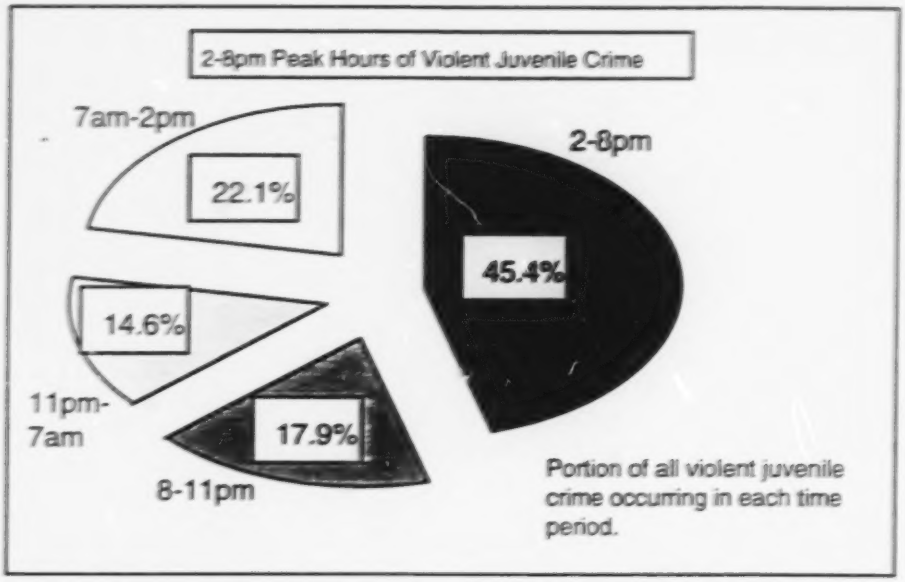
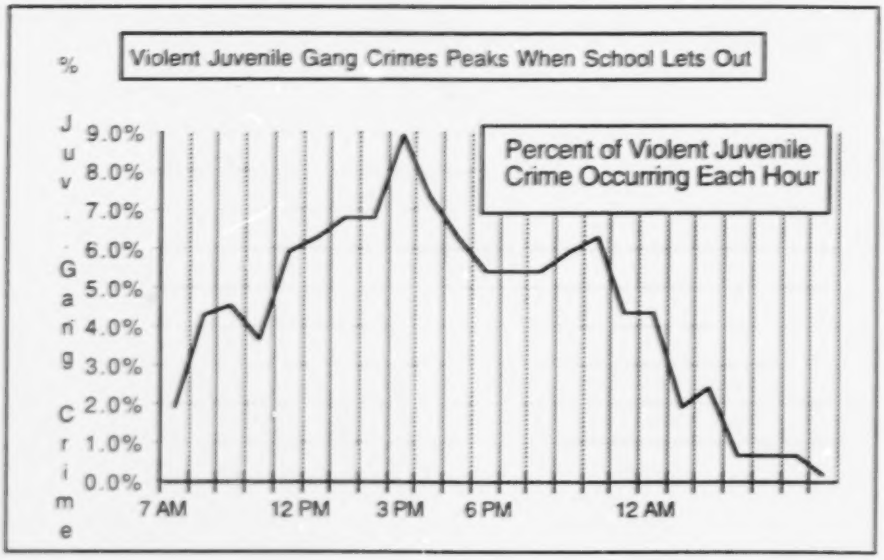
(63%) taking place in this eight-hour after-school and evening time period. In contrast, only about one seventh (14.6%) of all juvenile crime takes place during the "graveyard shift" from 11:00 PM to 7:00 AM.



Included in the newly released statistics are important data collected by the University of California-Irvine's Focused Research Group on Orange County Street Gangs. These data collected in 1994 and 1995, show that 60% of all juvenile gang crime occurred on school days, and, like other juvenile crime, it peaks immediately following school dismissal.[3]



3 Ibid.

II. Impact of After-School Programs on Juvenile Crime

Quality after-school (and summer) programs can be expected to reduce juvenile crime in two ways:

A. Immediate "Safe Haven and Control" Effects. Immediately upon implementation, after-school programs provide responsible adult supervision, constructive activities, and insulation from deleterious pressure from peers and older children during high-risk hours. By replacing unsupervised hours spent exposed to dangerous influences on a street corner with hours spent under supervision, after-school programs might be expected to eliminate all or most of the crimes participating youngsters might otherwise commit during those hours.

If the juvenile violent crime rate for the period from 3:00 PM-8:00 PM were brought down to school-hour levels, this would eliminate nearly one quarter (23%) of all juvenile violent crime committed on school days. (Of course, investments in weekend and summer programs could also be expected to have a major impact on crime committed on days when school is not in session, but consideration of that impact is reserved for a future analysis.)

Of course, not all youngsters would participate in after-school programs even if a wide variety of high-quality programs were available. It is difficult to predict voluntary participation rates, much less to predict how many teens might be required to participate by their parents. In addition, if quality after-school programs were accessible to all families, some localities might choose to require for children of specified ages that parents either provide supervision themselves, or make arrangements for alternative adult supervision. As a result, the immediate "control impact" would fall somewhat short of the one-quarter to one-third reduction which might otherwise be indicated.

B. Values and Skills Effect -- beginning quickly and building steadily. Recent research makes clear that the impact of after-school and other quality programs for children and youth far exceeds the **"Safe Haven and Control"** effect. Beginning in the first months and building steadily, quality after-school programs can be expected to have an enormous impact on the attitudes, values and skills of participating children.

Children spend only about one hour in school for every five hours awake.[4] How they spend the other four hours, not surprisingly, plays a major role in their development. Quality programs help children learn the skills they need to succeed academically, gain experience in serving their communities, and develop the attitudes, values and skills they need to contribute as good neighbors, family members and citizens.

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4 School Aged Child Care Project, Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, "Fact Sheet on School-Age Children," p. 1, September 1996.

1. Developmental risks for latchkey children and youth.

The need for after-school care has grown dramatically in recent years. In 1970, 37% of families with children under eighteen--already a very substantial percentage-- lacked full-time parental supervision.[5] By 1992, that percentage had increased to 57%.[6] Part of this increase is attributable to the growing number of single-parent families due to both increasing divorce and increasing out-of-wedlock births. However, two-thirds of this increase is a result of the increased number of families in which both parents work outside the home, often by necessity.[7]

Today, an estimated 17 million parents need care for their school-aged children.[8] Experts estimate that between five and seven million "latchkey children" go home alone after school, and that roughly 35% of twelve-year-olds are regularly left to fend for themselves while their parents are at work.[9]

Latchkey children are at significantly greater risk of truancy, receiving poor grades, and risk-taking behavior including substance abuse.[10] The more hours they spend on their own, and the earlier they begin doing so, the greater the risk.[11] Eighth-graders who were unsupervised for eleven or more hours per week were twice as likely to abuse drugs or alcohol as those under adult supervision.[12]

Even among those who have adult supervision, the quality of their after-school care varies widely-- and matters a great deal.

We know, for example, that children spend more of their out-of-school time watching TV than any other activity. Children's television viewing has been associated with lower reading achievement, behavioral problems, and increased aggression. When children watch more than three hours a day of television or watch violent programs, these risks increase.[13]

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5 James Alan Fox, "Trends in Juvenile Violence: A Report to the United States Attorney General on Current and Future Rates of Juvenile Offending,"Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. March, 1996, p. 12; Current Population Survey.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8Michelle Seligson, "School-Age Child Care Comes of Age," Child Care Action News, Vol. 14, No. 1, Jan.-Feb., 1997

9Ibid.

10Dwyer, K.M., Richardson, J.L., Danley, K.L., Hansen, W.B., Sussman, S.Y., Brannon, B., Dent, C.W., Johnson, C.A., and Flay, B.R. (1990) "Characteristics of eighth grade students who initiate self-care in elementary and junior high school." Pediatrics 86, 448-454.

11 Ibid.

12 Richardson, J.L., et al. "Substance use among eighth-grade students who take care of themselves after school," Pediatrics 84 (3), 556-566.

13 School Age Child Care Project, Ibid.

While upper middle-class families are often able to patch together a series of lessons or other activities to fill much of their out-of-school time, many children are left to spend their out-of-school time at home alone or on a dangerous street corner. This problem has been exacerbated by funding cuts for youth programs beginning in the early 1980's.

Children, especially adolescents, crave excitement and group activity. If they can't find it in programs organized by responsible adults, they become far more likely to find it in gangs. Too many children today have too little access to structured activity with positive role models, and are left to spend too much time "hanging out" or watching a few savage killings on television.[14]

2. Proven Developmental Benefits from after-school programs

Just as it is now clear that the lack of adult supervision and quality programs in the after-school hours places children at risk, it is clear that quality after-school programs have important impacts which are revealed in immediate crime reduction and enhanced experiences and characteristics which have been shown to be important "protective factors," making children less likely to engage in crime.

For example, a study of a 32-month after-school recreation program in a Canadian public housing project compared arrests of juveniles with those of another housing project providing only minimal recreational services. Compared to the two years prior to the program, the number of juvenile arrests declined by 75% during the course of the program in the experimental project, but increased by 67% in the comparison project.[15] Such dramatic results cannot be explained strictly on the basis of an "immediate control" impact.

A Columbia University study of housing projects in which Boys and Girls Clubs had been established as a part of the Justice Department's Operation Weed and Seed program showed that juvenile arrests were 13% lower than in projects without a Club. Moreover, drug activity was 22% lower in projects with a Club.[16]

A recent study of low-income children attending high-quality after-school programs showed that they got along better with their peers and had better grades, school conduct and emotional adjustment than other children. These children also had more learning opportunities and spent more time in academic or academically enriching activities and less time watching television.[17]

Similarly, a recent University of Wisconsin Study of 64 after-school programs supported by the Cooperative Extension Service found that teachers reported that these programs had helped

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14 James Fox, Ibid., p.3.

15 M.A. Jones and D.R. Offord, "Reduction of Antisocial Behavior in Poor Children by Nonschool Skill-Development," Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines 30:737-750 (1989).

16 Schinke, P. , Orlandi, M., and Cole, K., "Boys & Girls Clubs in Public Housing Developments: Prevention Services for Youth at Risk, "Journal Of Community Psychology, OSAP Special Issue, 1992.

17 Posner, J.K. and Vandell, D.L. (1994) Low-income children's after-school care: Are there beneficial effects of after-school programs? Child Development 65, 440-456.

children become more cooperative and better at handling conflicts. These children also developed greater interest in recreational reading and received better grades. Strikingly, a full third of the school principals at these sites claimed that vandalism at the school had decreased as a result of the programs.[18]

Additional evidence comes from school enrichment, mentoring, and neighborhood activity programs which show what a critical difference constructive use of out-of-school time can make. For example, a Public/Private Ventures study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters' carefully designed mentoring program showed that young people randomly assigned to receive a mentor were only about half as likely to begin illegal drug use during the period of study as those randomly assigned to the control group.[19] Among minority applicants, controls were three times as likely as participants to start using drugs.[20] Those who received mentors were also 38% less likely to initiate alcohol use during the period of study.[21] And, in a sign that the mentoring program had an impact on violent behavior, those in the mentoring program were only half as likely to have hit someone during the period of study.[22]

Moreover, randomly assigned participants in a high school Quantum Opportunities Program, which incorporates counseling, academic enrichment, life skills instruction, community service projects and financial incentives, were less than one quarter as likely to be convicted of a crime as those in a control group. It is important to note that while there are long-term impacts from programs such as these, (for example, those who participated in Quantum Opportunities were 50% more likely to graduate high school on time and two and a half times more likely to attend post-secondary schooling) the impact on arrests was virtually immediate. The program started when the youngsters began high school, and decreased arrests during the four years of high school by 75%.

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18 Riley, D., Steinberg, J., Todd, C., Junge, S., McClain, I. (1994) Preventing Problem Behavior and raising academic performance in the nation's youth: The impacts of 64 school age child care programs in 15 states supported by the Cooperative Extension Service Youth-At-Risk Initiative. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.

19 11.5% of the applicants denied a mentor initiated drug use during the period, compared to 6.2% of Little Brothers/Little Sisters. Joseph.Tierney, Jean Baldwin Grossman and Nancy L. Resch, "Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters," Public/Private Ventures, November, 1995, page 33.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid. 26.72% of the control group initiated alcohol use during the study, compared to 19.4% of the Little Brothers/Little Sisters.

22 Ibid. at p. 50.

Conclusion

It is now clear that prime time for juvenile crime begins when the afternoon school bell rings.

By the year 2005, the number of teens will increase by roughly 15% as the baby boomerang generation grows up. If we fail to invest in these children, their increasing numbers could mean an increase in crime. However, the concentration of violent juvenile crime in these after-school hours makes it especially accessible to preventive intervention.

Quality after-school programs are a key part of the solution. It seems reasonable to postulate that if quality after school programs were readily available to all young people, the "Safe Haven and Control" effect alone would result in a major decrease in violent juvenile crime.

The youth development "Values and Skills Effect" of such programs — their role in providing the adult supervision, positive role models, and constructive activities that help youngsters develop the values and skills they need to become responsible, contributing citizens— would likely have an even larger crime reduction impact.

If after-school programs were combined with both some of the other proven youth development programs described in this report, and some of the early childhood programs proven to reduce subsequent crime and delinquency,[23] even more dramatic reductions in crime could be achieved.

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[23] For example:

- The High Scope Educational Research Foundation's Perry Preschool project offered a randomly selected group of at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds a program of quality preschool care and a weekly home visit by parenting coaches. Twenty-three years later, the study found that the **kids denied these services when they were toddlers were five times more likely to become chronic lawbreakers by age 27.** (Lawrence J. Schweinhart, Helen B. Barnes, and David P. Weikart, *Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27*, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, Michigan: High/Scope Press, 1993. A chronic lawbreaker is defined as someone who has been arrested 4 or more times.)

- A similar Syracuse University Family Development Study showed that preschoolers denied its quality child care and home visiting program were **ten times more likely to become delinquent when they reached their teen-age years.** (J. Ronald Lally, Peter L. Mangione, Alice S. Honig, and Donna S. Wittner, "More Pride, Less Delinquency: Findings from the Ten-Year Follow-up Study of the Syracuse University Family Development Research Program," *The Zero to Three Child Care Anthology, 1984-1992*, Arlington: Zero to Three, 1992.)

- Child abuse and neglect are also key risk factors for later criminal behavior. Studies have shown that a child who is abused or neglected is twice as likely as other children to become a chronic lawbreaker as an adult, and as much as 67 times more likely to be arrested by age 12. (Michael G. Maxfield and Cathy Spatz Widom, "The Cycle of Violence: Revisited 6 Years Later," *Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* Vol. 150, April 1996; Cathy Spatz Widom, "The Cycle of Violence," National Institute of Justice, October 1992; and "Sacramento County Community Intervention Program: Findings from a comprehensive study by community partners in child welfare, law

Until the nation makes such investments in after-school and other programs for children and youth, we are likely to continue to pay a heavy price in crime and violence.

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enforcement, juvenile justice, and the Child Welfare League of America," Child Welfare League of America, June 1997.)

The good news is that home visitor programs — offering at-home parenting coaching to at-risk parents who want it — have been shown to cut child abuse and neglect in half. (Olds, David, *et al.*, "Improving the Life-course Development of Socially disadvantaged Parents: A Randomized Trial of Nurse Home Visitation," *American Journal of Public Health* 78, 1436-1445, 1988; James C. Howell, editor, *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, May 1995. See also Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research, National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, "Intensive Home Visitation: A Randomized Trial, Follow-up and Risk Assessment Study of Hawaii's Healthy Start Program," June 1996; and National Institute of Justice, "Helping to Prevent Child Abuse — Future Criminal Consequences: Hawaii Healthy Start," October 1995.)

Yet despite the mountain of evidence that the first years of life are critical to the development of the brain and of a child's attitudes, programs like Early Head Start (for infants) and the in-home parenting coaching that we know can head off abuse and neglect are so under-funded that they can reach only a tiny fraction of the infants who need them. Regular Head Start begins at age three, but reaches barely a third of eligible kids— and then only part of the day, only part of the year — and is starved for the funds needed to maintain high-quality programs.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	**Appendix: Data Used for Analysis**						
2							
3	Percentage violent juvenile crime occurring by hour on days when school is in session.						
4							
5							
6	All Juveniles	Hour			Gang	Hour	
7		7 AM	2.3%			7 AM	1.9%
8		8 AM	3.0%			8 AM	4.3%
9		9 AM	2.1%			9 AM	4.6%
10		10 AM	2.8%			10 AM	3.7%
11		11 AM	2.8%			11 AM	6.0%
12		12 PM	3.7%			12 PM	6.3%
13		1 PM	3.5%			1 PM	6.8%
14		2 PM	4.9%			2 PM	6.8%
15		3 PM	11.4%			3 PM	8.9%
16		4 PM	8.2%			4 PM	7.4%
17		5 PM	6.8%			5 PM	6.3%
18		6 PM	6.5%			6 PM	5.4%
19		7 PM	3.6%			7 PM	5.4%
20		8 PM	6.3%			8 PM	5.4%
21		9 PM	5.3%			9 PM	6.0%
22		10 PM	4.7%			10 PM	6.3%
23		11 PM	4.2%			11 PM	4.4%
24		12 AM	3.0%			12 AM	4.4%
25		1 AM	1.8%			1 AM	1.9%
26		2 AM	1.4%			2 AM	2.5%
27		3 AM	1.2%			3 AM	0.7%
28		4 AM	0.7%			4 AM	0.7%
29		5 AM	0.5%			5 AM	0.7%
30		6 AM	0.5%			6 AM	0.2%
31							